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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR MONTEVIDEO 6392
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0370
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 0040
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000806

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WHA/BSC FOR FRIEDMAN AND BLAKENEY
GUATEMALA FOR ALEX FEATHERSTONE
VILNIUS FOR THOMAS P. KELLY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [VE](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: RCTV: EMBASSY OUTREACH TO GOA AND LEGISLATIVE
LEADERS

REF: A. SECSTATE 52361

[1](#)B. BUENOS AIRES 00700

[1](#)C. BUENOS AIRES 00795

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The government of Argentina is not likely to make any overt efforts on the RCTV issue. Ambassador Wayne will seek to raise the issue again with Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana, but it seems that the GOA will not do more than say they have privately and politely raised the issue. The Ambassador raised the RCTV closing with Deputy Foreign Minister Garcia Moritan and separately with Planning Minister Julio De Vido on April 11 (ref. B), with First Lady and Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner on April 20 (ref. C), and with Senate President Pro Tempore Jose Pampuro on April 23. Garcia Moritan (protect) reported that both President Kirchner and the First Lady had raised privately the issue and their concerns directly with Chavez in March and that RCTV owner Marcel Granier had been in contact with the MFA. The First Lady was much less forthcoming. She did not confirm her discussion with Chavez (or her husband's) and, while stating that she would be the "first to criticize" should the Venezuelan government take actions that would threaten democracy in Venezuela, remarked that "Venezuela is a democracy with full press freedom." Embassy has no reason to believe that Deputy Foreign Minister Garcia Moritan was elaborating when describing the First Couple's intervention with Chavez. It could be the case that Fernandez de Kirchner did not feel comfortable sharing this information with the Ambassador in their first meeting, even in a private discussion, given the close GOA relationship with the BRV.
END SUMMARY.

Deputy Foreign Minister Garcia Moritan

[1](#)2. (C) On April 11 Ambassador Wayne met with Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan (ref. B) to discuss the RCTV situation. Garcia Moritan (protect) said the GOA had already raised the issue twice with Chavez and

had been in contact with Granier. Garcia Moritan said that President Kirchner had discussed RCTV with Chavez when he was in Buenos Aires on March 8-9, and that the First Lady, Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, had also raised the issue with Chavez in her lunch with him March 24 in Caracas. The Deputy ForMin also said that they were following the situation closely and had exchanged views with "others" (in the region). He said the issue was important for democracy and sustainability in the region. Garcia Moritan said that they had made clear that not extending the station's broadcast license for political reasons is not a good move.

First Lady and Senator Cristina

¶3. (C) When the Ambassador met April 20 with Fernandez de Kirchner (ref. C), she made no comments indicating she or President Kirchner had voiced their concerns to Chavez, or in fact that they were concerned. She told the Ambassador that she would be the "first to criticize" should the Venezuelan government take actions that would threaten democracy in Venezuela, and insisted that, in her opinion, "Venezuela is a democracy with full press freedom." She characterized the pending BRV takeover of RCTV as a "government decision not to renew an expired TV concession." Cristina stated that she would give her honest opinion about the government take-over of RCTV if asked during her upcoming trip to Washington, but that she would suggest redirecting questions on RCTV to the Venezuelan Ambassador in Washington. (Comment: Post has no reason to believe Garcia Moritan was elaborating or misinformed. It could be the case that, given the U.S.-Venezuela dynamic, Fernandez de Kirchner in her first meeting with the Ambassador was not going to discuss with us

-- even in private -- what would be a very sensitive issue with a key ally (BRV). Any leak of a frank discussion with us would be very embarrassing politically for an administration that publicly supports the BRV as the GOA does. End comment.)

Additional Outreach

¶4. (C) The Ambassador also met with Planning Minister Julio De Vido on April 11, who said he was not familiar with the RCTV issue but would convey our message to the President.

¶5. (C) On April 23 the Ambassador called on President Pro Tempore of the Senate Jose Pampuro, who said he was well aware of the RCTV issue and that it is complicated for the GOA. Pampuro did not elaborate on the RCTV issue or on how the GOA will react if Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez goes ahead with the take-over, but rather shifted the conversation to his dismay over the state of Argentine-Venezuelan relations (septel for details).

¶6. (C) The Ambassador is seeking to see Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana next week, before he travels to Washington, DC May 3 for the American Jewish Community dinner and will raise the RCTV issue if the meeting takes place.

WAYNE